APRIL 1959

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

"THE FUTURE OF OUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS"
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"The Future of Our Christian Schools"

by James Daane

For the Sake of The Record

An article entitled *The Future of Our Christian Schools* by Mr. Raymond J. Geerdes, principal of a Christian school in Ripon, California, appeared in the September 1958 issue of *Torch and Trumpet.* It was a rousing cry to battle against forces said to exist both within and outside the Christian Reformed churches, forces said to have brought matters to the dire pass where "the cause of Christian education is involved in a crisis," a crisis so serious that the "healthy emergence [of our Christian schools] in the years to come is much in doubt."

One of the outside threats to our Christian schools mentioned was a local California issue. This threat was the attempt by a self-styled committee for public schools to obtain legislation to make California the only state in the Union to tax private schools. The attempt was roundly defeated in the November 1958 election by the voters of California.

The other outside forces said to have precipitated the crisis envisioned by Mr. Geerdes are the statements on Christian education issued in 1957 by the Reformed Church in America, and by the then Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Evidence that these statements have had such a damaging impact on the membership of our churches as to have created a crisis whose outcome is uncertain is sweepingly assumed but nowhere provided.

LET us, therefore, turn to consider the threatening forces said to exist within the Christian Reformed churches. One is a letter written by the Rev. Hugh A. Koops to *The Banner* in which, to use Mr. Geerdes' own words, "Rev. Koops challenged the editorial on grounds that it strained Christian charity." Why Mr. Geerdes makes an issue of this, I know not. Whether Rev. Koops' judgment is right or wrong, it is in neither case a threat to Christian education.

Mr. Geerdes goes on to say: "But more significant still is the basic reason for Rev. Koops' criticism of our editor. He agrees essentially with the position of the Reformed Church, and he disagrees essentially with the position of the Christian Reformed Church. At the center of the attack of the Reformed Church and of Rev. Koops' argument is the attack on the doctrine of the covenant as justification for Christian schools." Evidence for this "attack" Mr. Geerdes finds in Rev. Koops' statement: "The second feature of the editorial which I found extremely disconcerting was the very weak argumentation for Christian education. Surely, the doctrine of the covenant alone does not demand a separate school system."

Is it now really true that this statement — "the doctrine of the covenant alone does not demand a separate school system" — is a grave threat to Christian schools, as Mr. Geerdes asserts? Mr. Geerdes himself appears not to believe that it is, for he goes on to say that "the question is not . . . whether the covenant 'alone' demands a separate school system." And he then goes on to say that the real question is whether the *sovereignty* of God, as reflected in the covenant and "as reflected in our total world and life view," demands Christian education. Why does the idea that the "covenant alone does not demand a separate school system" constitute a grave threat to Christian schools when uttered by Rev. Koops, but not when uttered by Mr. Geerdes? As proof of the existence of an internal threat to Christian education so damaging as to have created a crisis from which our Christian schools' emergence in years to come is doubtful, Rev. Koops and his letter appear to be but straw men constructed for the dramatic effect of blowing them over. For the arguments by which Mr. Geerdes lays them low, are arguments in which Mr. Geerdes himself does not believe.

Although he himself expresses agreement with Rev. Koops that the covenant alone does not demand separate Christian schools by his insistence that these schools rest on the sovereignty of God over all human life, he curiously proceeds to warn Rev. Koops by informing him (and all who agree with him!) that anyone who disagrees with our Christian Reformed position is faced with but two alternatives. Either he must use every legal means to change for position or, failing this, leave the Christian Reformed Church. Is Mr. Geerdes, himself educator, teacher, principal, really unaware of the fact that the Christian Reformed churches have no official position on this matter, and that therefore no one can accept our official position, to say nothing of being obliged to take legal means to change it, and if unsuccessful, under obligation to leave the Christian Reformed Church?

The second serious threat to Christian schools existing within Christian Reformed churches is what Mr. Geerdes calls a "distressing" article by Lester DeKoster which appeared in the *Reformed Journal* (Feb., 1958), in which Mr. DeKoster, in Mr. Geerdes' words, "strongly advocated a return to the vocational approach to education." I

do not here enter the discussion as to whether our Christian schools should teach typing, home economics, etc. But I do want to ask the reader whether Mr. DeKoster, or anyone else, or the Christian schools that do teach vocational subjects, are in fact such a terrible threat to Christian schools that they have precipitated these schools into such a crisis that their healthy emergence in years to come has become very doubtful. In view of his insistence that Christian schools are based on the "sovereignty of God . . . as reflected in our total world and life view," I should like to ask Mr. Geerdes why the teaching of vocational subjects is not a required and necessary function of a Christian school, rather than a threat to their very existence?

Thus far my evaluation of Mr. Geerdes' article would appear to lead only to the conclusion that his article is a beating of the war drums, rather than a careful, dispassionate, and objective evaluation of the present status of Christian schools.

HAVING uncovered the grave enemies of Christian schools both inside and outside the Christian Reformed churches, Mr. Geerdes concludes his article with a call to arms. He declares that since now the enemies have been located, "we must draw together in a continuous closed circle as [did] a group of Conestoga wagons of an immigrant train anticipating an Indian attack." His last words are: "Once our wagons are drawn together the direction of the attack matters little. Let the arrows fly."

Since Mr. Geerdes detects serious enemies to Christian education *within* the camp, his battle plans for fighting these Indians seem to be somewhat confused. There is, however, no doubt that of the trio of men described as the internal threat to Christian schools, the writer has the distinction of being "chief."

Now no Indian, especially if he be a chief, ought to show pain when he absorbs a few arrows. The truth is that having read Mr. Geerdes' article, I decided to make no reply. And I would have made none had not the October issue of *Torch and Trumpet* announced that the call for the September issue was so great, especially for Mr. Geerdes' article, that the latter article was to be printed in pamphlet form and sent without charge and *without request* to every Christian school teacher, and in sufficient quantities to every secretary of every Christian School Board so that every Board member might have one. To this was added that anyone, upon request, would be sent a copy free. In view of these tactics, I feel obligated both to the cause of Christian schools and to the readers of this *Journal* to make some comment on Mr. Geerdes' report of the speech I made to the California Christian Teachers' Institute held in Redlands, (Fall, 1957), and to indicate my position in regard to Christian schools.

Mr. Geerdes' report of the speech I made in Redlands, in so far as he reports the speech at all, is reasonably accurate, but the conclusions he has drawn from it are not only erroneous, but they are his not mine. I did say, and do believe, that one of the unfortunate, though not necessarily intended, by-products of Christian schools is a type of pupil who is often withdrawn and quite isolated from the many realities of the American scene. I did *not* suggest that Christian schools should be abandoned, but that this withdrawal and isolation should be recognized and efforts made to overcome it. Even if this observation made to school teachers were untrue to fact — and I do not believe it is — is it such that it has in it the makings of a grave crisis? This irresponsible alarmism quite ignores the historical fact that the motif of isolationism and withdrawal was a powerful factor in the emergence of Christian schools!

I did also suggest, as he correctly reports, that we shall not achieve an adequate philosophy of Christian education unless we become involved in the existing world of education. But I neither believe, nor said, as Mr. Geerdes broadly and erroneously suggests, that involvement *per se* will give us what we need. The fundamental and governing idea of a Christian philosophy of education is not to be obtained from non-Christian educational theory, but from the Christian faith itself. My point was, and is, that the meaning of the Christian faith is perceived by us only at the point where the Christian faith meets the actual world and is agitated by it, in this case the world of education.

This is but an application in the field of Christian education of the principle that the profoundest doctrinal insights into the truth of Christianity are obtained at those times and places where the Faith is involved in and agitated by heresy and error. The history of doctrine is the big and standing proof. Since the Christian faith is both an answer and solution to sin and unbelief, its meaning is not perceived except within the situation of involvement in sin and unbelief. This is the methodological principle of the Heidelberg Catechism: one can know the meaning of Christ as Savior only in terms of one's involvement with sin and unbelief. Just as the meaning of Christ cannot in the area of religion be understood except in terms of our involvement in sin and misery, just so the meaning of the Christian faith for education cannot and will not be perceived except in relation to our involvement in the sin and misery of education in general.

The Christian faith never comes to understand itself simply by looking at itself. The reason is simply that the Christian faith is the answer and so-

lution to the very non-Christian facts of sin and misery — whether in religion or in education. If this principle of "necessary involvement" is heretical, I am not aware of it. And again I leave it to the reader to decide whether the making of this observation to a Teachers' Institute is something that has created such crisis for our Christian schools that their future will remain in doubt for years to come.

Someone will perhaps say that the analogy with the Heidelberg Catechism is misleading, since we are not told to be involved in sin and misery but already actually are. But are we not also in fact involved in American education? Do not many of our Christian teachers attend public universities? Do we not pay taxes for public secular education? Do we not as Christians and as a Christian church feel the impact and suffer the consequences of a secular, materialistic, non-Christian education in America? Did not many of our schools quite uncritically take over a method of teaching reading from non-Christian educational theory, a method which today is being roundly criticized and rejected? It is an illusion to think that we are not involved in this sin and misery, and it is utterly unrealistic to try to isolate ourselves from a context in which we actually live. We are not of the world as to origin, but we are in the world as to location. Mr. Geerdes does not want to be involved in the world of education. I suggest that this is one of the major reasons why he has close to nothing to offer us as a Christian educator. When in the March 1959 issue of *Torch and Trumpet* he is challenged by the Rev. Koops to quit playing theologian and to engage himself seriously in his field of education in order to provide us with a *Christian educational* foundation for Christian schools, i.e., a statement of Christianity in terms of its meaning for education, Mr. Geerdes brushes his educational task as a Christian educator aside with the cry that this is secularism. The result is that Mr. Geerdes the Christian school teacher (principal) has nothing to say as a Christian *educator*.

I said above that Mr. Geerdes' report of my speech was reasonably accurate, although the conclusions he drew from it were both erroneous and strictly his own. When, however, Geerdes continues and says, "Dr. Daane was later questioned . . . ," matters are quite different. I wish first to register surprise at the kind of ethics which report in public print a controversial private conversation, particularly when "Dr. Daane was later questioned" by Mr. Geerdes himself, now turned reporter. And I can register only greater surprise at the editorial policy of *Torch and Trumpet* for publishing such out-of-door, after-the-meeting, private controversial conversation, as reported by one party to the controversy, to say nothing of reprinting it in pamphlet form, and distributing it free and without request to all teachers and school board members in the United States and Canada. Such editorial policy reveals an utter lack of concern for objective reporting and for fair-play.

Mr. Geerdes declares, "It is painful to bring so personal a criticism to public attention. Yet I would feel derelict in my duty not to challenge publicly so insidious and also so public an attack on the principles of Christian education." Since this "insidious" and "public" attack took place in private conversation, outdoors and after the public meeting, I can only wonder why he brings his "so personal a criticism to public attention," especially since he finds its so "painful."

What was this "insidious" attack on Christian education? This: "When Dr. Daane was later questioned," by Mr. Geerdes, whether isolationism could not be avoided by sending our children to public schools and involvement achieved by having our Christian school teachers teach in public schools, my answer was that they could. The answer I gave Mr. Geerdes was, admittedly, not very significant, for the simple reason that an answer can be worse, but never better than the question. I did not, however, recommend, nor even suggest, what he in question form suggested. Mr. Geerdes, however, implies the very opposite when he asks, "Is this involvement or suicide"? His question is in fact but a melodramatic appeal to the galleries, since I neither recommended nor even suggested such "involvement" or "suicide."

Mr. Geerdes also wrote, "It is also public knowledge that the Los Angeles Christian School has closed. Perhaps certain extenuating circumstances enter in. Yet one cannot help wondering to what extent the publicly expressed philosophy of Dr. Daane helped to bring this about." I can only wonder whether he "cannot help wondering," especially in print, since when questioned by him concerning this matter I gave him a number of important reasons why the Los Angeles Christian School has been temporarily closed. Had he chosen to report my public speech without his deductions, and without his own report of a private conversation, and had he chosen to report the reasons given him for the closing of the Los Angeles school, without his personal wonderings, 99 percent of his readers would wonder with me.

For the Sake of Our Schools

If we drain personalities and dramatics from Mr. Geerdes' article (and pamphlet), we discover what troubles him. Not everyone agrees that the ground and justification for Christian schools is the covenant. They who would build on another foundation than that acknowledged by Geerdes, are, according to him, a threat to our schools and a peril to their future. Mr. Geerdes holds to his position with an ardor that leads him to describe it as the

"official" position of our Christian Reformed Church, and that leads him quite gracelessly to inform those who disagree that they ought to leave the Christian Reformed Church, for only thereby will they preserve their honesty. He writes, "At the center of the attack of the Reformed Church and of Rev. Koops' argument is the attack on the doctrine of the covenant as justification for Christian schools. . . . This then is the central point, this matter of the covenant and its interpretation." The central point then of Mr. Geerdes' criticism is that if any Church, theologian, or minister does not agree with Mr. Geerdes' interpretation of the covenant as it relates to Christian schools, such a Church, theologian, or minister is in his language attacking the covenant itself, threatening the future welfare of our schools, and, if he be theologian or minister within the Christian Reformed Church, violating his personal honesty. This is Mr. Geerdes' judgment.

Before considering its validity, let us see how he stands in the light of his own judgment. He tells us that he believes Christian schools have their justification in the "Sovereignty of God, as borne out in the Covenant of Grace, and as reflected in our total world and life view . . . ." So then Mr. Geerdes himself does not believe that the covenant and its interpretation is central as regards either the foundation of Christian schools or the threat which he thinks to see.

In a later writing in which he again disagrees with Rev. Koops (*Torch and Trumpet*, March, 1959) he informs his readers that we must "ground our schools first of all in God, his Word, his Covenant, his Kingdom, his Truth . . . ." Some of his readers may wonder what could possibly follow this "first of all," but no thoughtful reader will fail to observe that the "central point" even for Mr. Geerdes is no longer the covenant and its interpretation. He himself provides a much wider basis for Christian schools than the doctrine of the covenant when he grounds them in God, His Word, etc. If, as he vigorously declares, they who do so attack the covenant, imperil Christian schools, violate their personal honesty unless they leave the Christian Reformed Church, then . . . . By what judgment one judges, he shall be judged.

SINCE Mr. Geerdes is by training and profession an educator and not a theologian, we cannot expect him to be an expert in the science of theology. But we may expect him to know the limitations and responsibilities of his chosen profession.

Were he aware of the limitations of his training and profession, he would be less prone to glib theological pronouncements and to easy criticism of the theology of those who make theology their life study. He would then be hesitant to the point of silence about the strictly theological foundation of Christian schools, about the "official" theological position of his church on this matter, and about the exit ministers and theologians ought to take out of the Christian Reformed Church if they disagree with him.[1]

What is at stake in this grave crisis described by Mr. Geerdes, one which is so severe that the future of our Christian schools has been rendered uncertain for years to come? Mr. Geerdes tells us that if we close circle as immigrant wagons anticipating an Indian attack, "this closed circle contains those things that we value most: our covenant concept, creeds, biblical theology, world and life view, Kingdom consciousness, and unity of purpose in church and home and school."

If, now, *these* things are under attack and in grave crisis, then surely it is the Church rather than the school which is in crisis. If *these* things are really in grave crisis because some people have erroneous ideas about the theological foundation of Christian schools, then it would be high time to close the schools for the sake of the Church. We need not, however, become perturbed, for the Church is not, nor ever shall be thus dependent on Christian schools nor on our right (or wrong) thinking about them. The reader will observe that the things mentioned as being in grave crisis do not contain a single educational matter. We hear again the churchman; the voice of the educator is not heard.

In a section entitled, "Can We Defend Ourselves?", it is said there is but one solution to the crisis of our schools. "That solution is to ground our schools more firmly in our distinctive faith and all its implication." This, it appears, does not for Mr. Geerdes mean concentrating on the business of Christian education. Stating the meaning of Christianity in terms of education, developing a philosophy or science of Christian education, is said to be "important" but "not compulsory." One could wish that Mr. Geerdes felt a greater compulsion to work at what he admits is an important task, and one which belongs to the field of his profession. What then are we, according to Mr. Geerdes, under compulsion to do? What is the one solution to the crisis? What does he mean by his assertion that our schools must be more firmly grounded in our distinctive faith and its implicitions? This: "Church

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1. Mr. Geerdes' competence as theologian shows in his assertion that unless we ground Christian schools in God's truth, covenant, Kingdom, etc., "we shall not redeem society." Does he really believe that our right thinking about Christian schools will redeem society? In the same context he asserts: "Christian education receives its light from God's truth, and thereby illumines all other truth. If our lamps go out it will be awfully dark." If the lamps of Christian education go out, will it really be "awfully dark"? Are Jesus and all His followers no longer the light of the world? If these are typical samples of Mr. Geerdes' theology, he might well heed the advice given him by Rev. Koops to "remain in education and stay clear of theology."

and school must draw closer together, they must join hands." He writes, ". . . the church must act also. The embrace must be mutual, for mutual purposes and goals." If this leads, says Mr. Geerdes, to parochialism, he has no objection in principle. He says, "We are frightened by parochialism. . ." and adds, "We have nothing to fear by tying our schools closer to our churches." And he concludes, "Perhaps this joining of hands by church and school need not lead to outright parochialism."

In the light of these statements we can evaluate his accusation against those within the denomination who, he says, are trying to drive church and school apart. He writes, "Even more alarming is the growing demand of those within our own denomination who would drive church and school apart. . . ."

If Mr. Geerdes wants to make cause for parochialism, that is his privilege. But it is not his privilege to turn the facts upside down by going into print crying "Wolf" and sounding alarms against those "enemies" of Christian schools who accept our Church's synodically adopted position that our Christian schools should be free and independent and not parochial, church schools. Does he not know that our Church has rejected parochialism, and that they who wish to keep church and school apart are not enemies but supporters of the kind of schools which our Church at least desires to have? They who agree with their Church deserve better treatment than they have received at Mr. Geerdes' hands.

When Mr. Geerdes declares that the only solution to our grave crisis is to ground our schools in our faith and that stating the meaning of Christianity in terms of education is important but not compulsory, he is speaking as a simple Christian. This is no reflection on him as a Christian. In the area of art, politics, economics, etc., most of us speak most of the time as simple Christians. But when a Christian educator, principal of a Christian school, goes into print with an article entitled *The Future of Our Christian Schools*, and even allows it to be published as a pamphlet and distributed free of cost, in order to tell as many as possible about a grave crisis in Christian education, then we have a right to expect to hear the voice of a professional Christian educator speaking expertly in the field of education, and not merely the voice of a simple Christian. Yet if Mr. Geerdes' readers expected to hear the voice of an educator speaking on critical problems of education, they were disappointed.

If indeed there is a crisis in Christian *education*, Mr. Geerdes ought, if he feels compelled to speak, to tell us what it is. Yet he did not even attempt to do so. When challenged by Rev. Koops (*Torch and Trumpet*, March, 1959) to stay in the field of education and state for us the Christian education-ground for Christians schools, he simply answers that the ground for Christian schools is "the *terra firma* of God's truth." Except for the Latin, this is the voice of the simple Christian, not the voice of an educator. Again: "Unless we ground our schools first of all in God, his Word, his Covenant . . . , we shall have no message, no purpose, no mission and we shall not redeem society . . . " (*ibid.*). In short, though trained by the help and expense of the Church in the field of Christian education, he speaks in the field of his profession as a simple Christian, and at times as a not very good theologian, but says nothing on this important matter that has anything specifically to do with education.

THE fault is not entirely his. It stems rather from the fact that he has long been taught (as have the rest of us) that the ground and necessity, justification and purpose of Christian day schools stems especially and particularly from the doctrine of the covenant. Being thus conditioned by our tradition, it is not surprising that much of our thought about Christian schools has never been able to get beyond what is strictly speaking the area of religion and piety into the science of Christian education. Thankfully our practice has been much better than our theoretical thinking.

Conditioned as we have been to think of Christian schools almost exclusively in terms of the religious demands and significance of the covenant, it is not surprising that we think of our Christian schools as mere agencies and arms of the Church, without which the Church could not be strong; that we think of the objectives of Christian schools more in terms of the ecclesiastical-religious than in terms of the Christian academic-cultural; that some Christian school teachers think of their academic task more in terms of church than school, and often speak on education sounding more like preachers than teachers; that we *as church members* think of these schools as our schools, schools which give the kind of education which can alone be given to covenant children; that some have gone so far as to urge that there should be separate Christian schools for non-covenant children because the Christian day school education imparted to them should be of another kind; that vows made on the occasion of the baptism of our children are said to include not only the promise to instruct them in the knowledge of the Christian faith, in the three things *necessary* to live and die happily, but also the promise to give our children a Christian *cultural* education, as though a cultural education were something the Church could insist upon as a religious necessity stemming from the obligations of the covenant; and finally it is not surprising that having been

taught to think of Christian education almost exclusively in terms of the covenant we find it almost impossible to distinguish between the Christian faith as expressed non-scientifically in personal religion and piety, and the Christian faith as expressed scientifically in terms of Christian education and Christian theology. It is the inability to make this distinction which misleads Mr. Geerdes into thinking that it is the task of the science of theology to privide the foundation for Christian schools, and blinds him to the fact that this task belongs rather to him as educator and to his science of Christian education. His failure here leads him to set up false alternatives: either Christian theology, i.e., theologians and ministers, must provide the foundation for Christian schools, or such schools will be left with only a secular, non-Christian foundation. But there is surely a third alternative — and it is not really optional — the task belongs to him and the science of Christian education in which he has been trained. Taught by long years to think of Christian education almost exclusively in terms of the covenant, he fails to recognize both the limitations of his profession and the responsibilities of his profession.[2] With Rev. Koops I would advise: Get into education and stay clear of theology, for the former is your science by training and profession, not the latter.

If there is a crisis in our Christian day school educational system it stems from this traditional habit of viewing the ground and goals and necessity of Christian schools in terms of the doctrine of the covenant alone, which is to say, exclusively in what are, strictly speaking, merely religious perspectives. It is this which has produced the confused perspectives and the blurring of the necessary distinctions mentioned above.

For the sake of the health and future good of our Christian schools, their ground, necessity and purpose must be found in a much wider Christian basis. Ground them merely in the covenant and discover their necessity and purpose merely in the covenant, and there is not a single good reason why they should not be parochial schools. If our schools are to escape the haunting shadow of parochialism and the unhealthy paternalism of the Church, and to develop according to their own genius as given in their own distinctive nature and function as Christian schools, they must be delivered in our thought from their present narrow base, and their ground, necessity, and purpose discovered in a much broader and wider basis in the Christian faith.

2. Does Mr. Geerdes strong disagreement with what he calls Mr. DeKoster's "vocational approach to education" perhaps stems from the fact that Mr. Geerdes does not know how to relate the subjects taught in a trade school and business college to the doctrine of the covenant?

If we admit that the covenant demands the kind of religious education given in the church and home, and if we admit that a Christian cultural education (the kind given in a day school) must find its necessity in a wider basis in the Christian faith, one which will reveal the necessity of viewing and teaching culture in the light of Christian truth, we may find it somewhat more difficult to gain the commitment of our membership to Christian education. More difficult, because it is obviously easier to gain a parent's commitment to Christian day schools when appeal is made in terms of the covenant, a doctrine which stands so intimately related to the child's salvation, than to gain it in terms of the meaning of Christianity for culture — day school education being a cultural matter. But if we do we shall not only be completely honest about the matter, but such who are won to the cause of Christian education will be won for the genuine article, and these will be in favor not only of Christian primary and secondary schools, but also in favor of Christian education on the college and university level. These will not object to giving their loyalty and their monies to a Christian institution which educates lawyers, doctors, and engineers, as so many do who think of Christian education in terms merely of the covenant. These will also have a passion for a Christian university, a passion which is almost nonexistent among the many who now believe in Christian education but regard it merely as a fulfillment of the doctrine of the covenant. History has shown that it is quite impossible to gain the wholehearted loyalty of our membership to a Christian cultural education on a college or university level by an appeal to the covenant. They intuitively sense that the covenant does not demand, and that they did not vow to give their child, a cultural education (Christian or otherwise!) on the college or university level.

I cannot, therefore, agree with Mr. Geerdes' position that anyone who disagrees with the idea that the covenant is the specific ground for Christian schools is attacking the covenant and imperiling the future of our Christian schools, and is to be classified as an "enemy." I think rather that only when Christian schools are grounded in that wider Christian basis which reflects the meaning of Christianity for culture and thus are provided with a basis which reflects their specific purpose and function, will they truly begin to flower and to come into their own, being delivered from the threat of parochialism and churchly paternalism which would reduce a Christian educational institution to the status of being a mere agency and arm of the church.

Finally, it is only when we consciously allow Christian day school cultural education to rest on its proper foundation and to pursue its distinctive pur-

pose freely, that religious education within the church will again come into its own. We sometimes smile condescendingly at the thought that "Christian education" in a Presbyterian or Methodist church means only the kind of Christian education given within and by the church, and does not mean what we mean by the term, namely, Christian day schools. We ought to remember that the religious education given by and within the church is precisely the kind of education demanded by the covenant, the kind of education which ought to be the first and primary concern of the church of Christ. Yet is it not true that there is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that Christian Reformed churches devote more of their passionate concern, more of their monies, and more of their talent, prayers and energies to the promotion of the kind of Christian cultural education given in Christian day schools, than to the specifically religious education demanded by the covenant, the kind given in and by the church? This is a subject by itself, and cannot be discussed here. I shall merely point up the problem by asking two questions. Is it not true that there are many congregations which are known as being strong or weak congregations for Christian schools? But where is one known as a congregation which has a strong and effective religious education department within its own walls? And the second question: Is it not true that a congregation which does not have, or at least does not work for a Christian day school, is looked at askance? But a congregation which has no religious education program to meet the religious educational demands of the covenant, is neither chided nor looked at askance.

This article is written in the conviction that our whole idea of religious or Christian instruction or education has lost its proper perspective and calls for a lot of cool reflection to bring it into proper focus.

Christian Unity at Gindiri

(Geneva to Gindiri, III)

by Lester DeKoster

FEBRUARY 14, 1959, was a day of signal importance to the Christian Church which we have helped bring into being in Northern Nigeria. For on that day the Oneness in Christ which, according to manifold testimony, animates the hearts of Nigerian Christians everywhere came to overt, unified, institutional expression in the Theological College of Northern Nigeria.

With appropriate ceremonies, the TCNN became living reality, housed in quarters at Gindiri until its building program is advanced at Bukuru. And while we largely ignored that event here, the Nigerian Christians who assembled at Gindiri to praise God for the gift of advanced theological education did not forget us. How could they?

There is abundant evidence — in Nigeria and in our record — to show that the Nigerian Christian would be remiss in his gratitude if he did not thank God for the part which the Christian Reformed Church has shouldered in bringing TCNN into existence, and endowing it with powerful, dedicated leadership. Thus the hymns they sang, the prayers they raised, and the words they spoke at Gindiri on February 14 witnessed their joy also for us, though at this crowning moment we sat silently by.

The President of the Board of Governors of TCNN was there — furnished by the Christian Reformed Church — the Reverend Mr. E. H. Smith.

The Principal of the School was there — furnished by the Christian Reformed Church — the Reverend Dr. H. R. Boer.

The two other professors were also there: one a Danish Lutheran, and the other a British Baptist, both by confession our brethren in Jesus Christ.

The students who qualified for the first class were there: twenty-five of them. Our missions furnished three of these, all from the Tiv; none yet qualified from Benue.

They all sang, prayed, and praised together, testifying their Oneness in faith, conviction, dedication, and commitment.

The first class has settled down to work now. Instruction in the Bible, exegesis, Greek, church history, homiletics, liturgics, ethics, doctrine, mission principles, Mohammedanism, and primitive religions lies before them in the next four years. The Christian Church of Northern Nigeria has a school, already of stature and promising more, to which it can point its ablest converts who seek advanced education to the meet the challenges and opportunities of rapidly awakening national life in their country. Another sluice gate has been opened through which pours the spiritual and intellectual dynamic of the Spirit of God. What this foundation of living waters will mean to thirsty Africa

only God can tell. And left with Him the future is secure enough.

Doctrinal Basis

The TCNN is built upon a Rock.

That Rock is the same One upon which we stand.

It is Jesus Christ.

All other foundation is shifting sand. We know this. We need not suppose that Nigerian missionary leadership is ignorant of the same truth.

This faith in the Rock of our salvation comes to creedal expression, for us and also for the Nigerian Christian.

TCNN has, therefore, a creedal formulation of its footing on Christ. This formulation is written into its Constitution. It is the same formulation as that upon which we have worked with five other denominations in the Sudan United Mission since 1939. In accepting membership in the Sudan United Mission, Synod of 1939 declared that "it accepts this doctrinal basis and holds no doctrinal views which are not in accord with the principles of that basis." That "basis," both of S.U.M. and of TCNN, reads as follows:

"*The doctrinal basis of the College shall be*:

A. *The Apostles' Creed*

B. *The Nicene Creed*

C. *The following specific beliefs*:

1) *The Unity of the Godhead and the trinity of Persons therein*

2) *The incarnation of the Son of God, His atoning blood, His bodily resurrection, His mediatorial intercession and reign, and His personal return*

3) *The total depravity of human nature in human consequence of the fall*

4) *The Justification of the sinner by faith in Christ alone*

5) *The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner*

6) *The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal bliss of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked*

7) *The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures*

8) *The divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*"

It is understood that the Board of Governors "accepts the nominees of member bodies to the staff upon their willingness to subscribe to the doctrinal basis . . . and has the authority to refuse the appointment of a nominee, and to suspend or dismiss members of the staff as provided for in the constitution."

The attestation of this creedal formulation to the Rock upon which the College stands is indubitable. Those who wish that a phrase or clause among the eight "specific beliefs" were worded other than it is, or that more or less were specified, do well to recall Calvin's preface to his *Genevan Catechism*, which he accounted a "formal profession of faith." Says he, "But as, from many causes, it will scarcely ever obtain otherwise than that each Church shall have its own Catechism, we should not strive too keenly to prevent this; provided, however, that the variety in the mode of teaching is such, that we are all directed to one Christ, in whose truth being united together, we may grow up into one body and one spirit, and with the same mouth also proclaim whatever belongs to the sum of faith." And when, early in the *Catechism*, he comes to ask what, "in a few words, the sum of this knowledge is," he answers: "It is contained in the Confession of Faith, or rather Formula of Confession, which all Christians have in common. It is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, because from the beginning of the Church it was ever received among all the pious, and because either it fell from the lips of the Apostles or was faithfully gathered out of their writings" (*Tracts*, II, 34, 38-9).

The reader has noted that this same Creed which summed up for Calvin that "knowledge" which unites all Christians into "one body and one spirit" stands at the head of the doctrinal confession of TCNN.

Our Silence

The audible silence with which we greeted the events of February 14 at Gindiri has its own explanation. Some wished to ignore the fact that on this day a united theological enterprise, fostered by ourselves and led by our representatives, came into institutional existence. Others rejoiced, but thought it unseemly to parade their joy in the face of a Synodical Committee studying the wisdom of our involvement in the School. The lights which might have glowed among us on February 14 had been shorted for a time by sharp criticism.

The Criticism: Step One

The critics have been, in fact, relatively few, and they have sounded in various keys and in many ways relatively few themes. Their basic note has been the charge that our participation in TCNN involves us in doctrinal compromise. This article must, by commitment, be directed to a supposed consequence of this compromise — namely, pedagogical *confusion* — but I hope next month to ask seriously if we do, in fact, betray our distinctiveness and our confession by participation in TCNN. For TCNN is now a fact; instruction is in process there. And we are now joined in that process — without bit-

terness, without compromise, and without disloyalty to our heritage.

But there is an argument, once called the second of the two "most weighty" against our participation in TCNN, which I intended to examine long ago; and will discuss now.* It is the argument that students at a united theological seminary would become hopelessly "confused." This contention has lately been echoed again, in the form of an accusation that graduates of TCNN will "not know what they believe."

In passing, it may clear the ground a little to observe that criticisms in this vein of the kind of theological training afforded by TCNN have taken a variety of form and content, some quite surprising. Let me list at random a few expressions garnered from the critics' writing; theological education at TCNN has been characterized as:

". . . insipid"
". . . confused 'general Christianity' "
". . . ecumenical compromise"
". . . small part theologically sound"
". . . by far larger part . . . committed to bad doctrine destructive to a sound church"
". . . confused and self-contradictory"
". . . a sacrifice of the foundation of the Word of God."

I say that the reader may find some of these characterizations at least surprising, and not the less so when he compares them with the creedal basis of the School, with which Synod of 1939 found itself in complete agreement. Indeed, a proper estimate of the weight and propriety of such charges as those I have quoted usually becomes apparent as soon as the charge and the creedal basis of the School come face to face.

Education at TCNN is based upon, and seeks to make living and relevant for Nigerian Christians, the mighty affirmations written into the creedal basis of the School. I shall not myself affront the reader by asking him, step by step, what can be *"insipid"* or *"confused"* or *"compromising"* or *"bad doctrine"* or *"self-contradictory"* about teaching the truths enunciated in the Apostles' Creed, or about teaching in confessed loyalty to that Creed. The reader may, if he has the fortitude, ask such questions for himself.

Furthermore, to inquire earnestly whether, for example, teaching the doctrine of "the unity of the Godhead and the trinity of persons therein" is "confusing" and "insipid," is to skirt the edge — to put it mildly — of irreverence.

No doubt some of the argument used against our participation in TCNN merits this kind of explicit exposure to the Christian, evangelical, orthodox creedal basis of the School. The reader who turns back for a second perusal of those fundamental truths confessed by the faculty who teach in TCNN may shudder a little at further characterizations of TCNN teaching like these: "5 or 6 brands of conflicting theology" — one of these "brands" presumably our own? Is someone thinking of TCNN as a kind of theological super-market, purveying, as another critic phrases it, "a half dozen varieties of Christian belief?"

Of which "variety," then, is the Nicene Creed? Or dare I ask, of which "brand" is this: "The incarnation of the Son of God, His atoning blood, His bodily resurrection, His mediatorial intercession and reign, and His personal return"? If to know this, and to live it, is to be "confused," who of us does not passionately desire such "confusion"!

We "sacrifice," we are told, "the foundation of the word of God" when we participate in a School which in fact, confesses "the divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures." There is, no doubt, confusion rampant when such charges are made; but it is not at Gindiri.

We endorse, it is said, the heresy that man can help to "save himself" when we support a School based, in fact, on the confession of "the total depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall" and "the justification of the sinner by faith in Christ alone."

"By far the larger part" of TCNN education, we hear, is "committed to bad doctrine destructive to a sound church," when in fact the doctrinal basis of the School has been endorsed by our Church as completely in harmony with our own. If, then, TCNN rests for the "larger part" on "bad doctrine," on what rest we?

Of course, if someone is honestly committed to these careless characterizations, not to caricatures, of what is true of TCNN, he will fear that students will become "confused" and will graduate "not knowing what they believe." But the cure for this misapprehension is not our withdrawal from the School; it is a more careful study of what is really confessed and taught there.

But we must pause here. If the criticisms which I have been quoting seem to caricature TCNN, it will not do in return to seem to caricature the criticisms themselves. Presumably no one, however much carried away by vehemence for his own cause, can really *mean* to say that teaching the universal creeds of Christendom, or a teaching based upon them, is and must be an "insipid," "self-contradictory," or "confusing" process. We—or the critics — must have omitted a relevant step in the argument, though this can hardly undo the extravagance and exaggeration of the kind of criticism I have been quoting. But let us examine the argument again.

*The first of the two "most weighty" arguments was discussed in the *Reformed Journal* for September 1958 and January, 1959.

Step Two

If the charge of pedagogical "confusion" probably does *not* mean that the creedal basis of the School is itself conducive to "confusing," "insipid" (and the like) education, what *does* this charge *mean*?

Perhaps the argument seems so self-evident to its proponents that none of them thinks to define it carefully. There are differences, they say, among the professors of the College. Is it not obvious, then, that their teaching must be "confusing" and "self-contradictory"

No. *It is not obvious!*

The mere fact of *difference* does not of itself mandate confusion. There are, for example, wide differences in subject matter at any school; homiletics differ from, say, Greek syntax, as liturgics differs from primitive religion. All four are taught — among many other *different disciplines* — in complete harmony everywhere.

Difference, *as such,* does not involve confusion; on the contrary, difference is the basis of harmony, as at least every musician knows.

So we turn again to the argument of "confusion" and ask its meaning. And we may measure the ground we have traversed so far, as follows: Step One: Confusion does not stem from the creedal basis of TCNN; Step Two: confusion does not arise out of the mere fact of difference within the School.

Step Three

But now perhaps the critic of TCNN will interject: *specify* (he says) *the difference,* by adding one word before it, and you will have arrived at the nub of the argument for "confusion." Before the word *difference* put (he continues) the word "doctrinal" or the word "denominational." It is difference among the faculty in *doctrinal* views which insures pedagogical "confusion."

Shall we say that *this* is the criticism, then: doctrinal difference among the TCNN professors leads to "insipid," "self-contradictory" and "confused" pedagogy?

Before examining this contention, let me save time and space in the long run by commenting upon two terms which can be discussed together, if we but remember the distinction between them. They are: *doctrinal* and *denominational.* The first refers to matters of creed or belief; the second to matters of institution or organization. But they are intimately related. Denominationalism embodies, or reflects, doctrinal distinctiveness. By accidents of history or of geography, it may happen that two groups of Christians holding essentially the same doctrinal views are yet separated into different denominational structures, as is true in regard to us and the sister churches we acknowledge abroad. But this is the kind of exception which proves the general rule: doctrinal difference commonly is reflected in denominational difference. In fact the defense of denominationalism is usually based upon the argument of loyalty to doctrinal distinctions. Whether or not we agree with Dr. Dooyewerd's bold contention that different church organizations, based upon differences in confession, constitute a "regrettable state of things [which] should urge all true Christians to confess their guilt and repent" (*New Critique,* III, 542), the *fact* of denominational difference as the *embodiment* of confessional difference is patent to us all. I choose, therefore, not to discuss *doctrinal,* and then *denominational,* differences in TCNN, but to use the two terms as synonomous enough for accuracy.

Let us now proceed with the discussion.

There are at present three denominations represented on the Staff of the College. There are, no doubt, certain doctrinal differences among their representatives, for this is what (we have just pointed out) denominationalism means. *Does it follow that these differences make for pedagogical confusion?*

Why should it?

Moreover, why should anyone wish seriously to contend that doctrinal and denominational distinctiveness can be maintained in a corporate body only at the consequence of self-contradiction and confusion?

If it is really true that the basic Christian doctrines expressed by the creedal statements upon which TCNN rests *cannot be taught* without confusion in an atmosphere charged with doctrinal and denominational distinctiveness, shall we blame the basic Christian doctrines or the doctrinal and denominational distinctiveness?

To put it in another way: if it be true that what Calvin calls "the sum of this knowledge . . . which all Christians have in common" can by denominational distinctiveness really be rendered "insipid" and "confusing" to such extent that students tutored in this knowledge do not, after four years, "know what they believe," what a *monumental indictment* this is of such denominational and doctrinal distinctiveness!

The more insistent, then, the critics of TCNN are that united theological education of the kind in progress at Gindiri must be "confusing" and "self-contradictory," the more plainly do they demonstrate the accuracy of Dr. Boer's criticism of their understanding of denominationalism!

For this is the key to understanding their criticism: the critics rest on a false view of doctrinal distinctiveness and denominational differences, namely, that doctrinal distinctiveness must inevitably demand separate and divided institutional witness, even where, as in Nigeria, fellow Christians do not desire such separation.

I have insisted before, in these pages, that doctrinal differences can be maintained in Christian

harmony. In this way loyalty to denominational distinctiveness can be lived without violation of Christian unity. Calvin taught and lived this kind of unity-in-difference; but the critics of TCNN will not have it so. Some do not want to hear Calvin transposed without adaptation to the twentieth century; and others make exhaustive efforts to show that no man of unity-in-difference was he. And so the critics of TCNN are left with a view of denominationalism which comes to expression in "brands" and "varieties" of "Christian belief." All they can discern in the inter-denominational life of the Church comes to formulation in *alternatives*: distinctiveness *or* participation; truth *or* unity; truth *or* love. And therefore all they can prescribe for us in Nigeria is *separation*, a visible *division* of the visible Body of Christ. Why? Because they insist upon a conception of doctrinal and denominational distinctiveness which makes such distinctiveness the *enemy* of that *Oneness* which Christ enjoins, that *Oneness* which Calvin desperately sought, and that *Oneness* which right now the Nigerian Christians enjoy. Governed by this distorted view of denominationalism, the critics of TCNN can envision naught but "confusion" arising out of inter-denominational educational enterprise.

What view, then, of denominational and doctrinal distinctiveness will account for unity-in-difference, and will promise that the great creedal affirmations upon which TCNN rests can embrace and harmonize the doctrinal differences to be found there? Let me proffer one such view.

Denominational differences are real. The doctrinal distinctions under-lying them are equally real. Critics and supporters of TCNN are at one in this: we all seek to be loyal to those doctrines which, by our confession of them, identify us as Reformed Christians. That this has been disparagingly called "hyphenated Christianity (Reformed-hyphen-Christians) is a contention with which I shall deal at length next month. Meanwhile, to go on:

Denominationalism *witnesses* to two sides of one inescapable and indivisible loyalty: on the one side, we are loyal to those truths which Calvin called the "sum" of Christian knowledge (this side of our loyalty defines us as Christian); and, on the other side, we are loyal to our interpretation of those particular doctrines about which we and other Christians differ (this side of our loyalty defines us as Reformed). This is *true* Protestantism, and so long as man remains finite, so long will *true* denominationalism exhibit this character of division-in-unity.

From this perspective, *doctrinal distinctiveness* can come to clear and loyal expression *within* the unity of the Body of Christ, but such overt doctrinal distinctiveness need by no means be divisive, separatistic, insipid, confusing, or self-contradictory. How indeed can it be these negative things, if the distinctiveness itself roots in these fundamental doctrines which, as Calvin put it, "all Christians have in common"? And it is precisely this "common" loyalty, shared by Christians as *Christians* which has the *power — because it is of God and in Christ — to embrace differences* in such a way that they can be frankly maintained without compromise, bitterness, self-contradiction, or confusion.

The Calvinist at Gindiri does not say to his Baptist colleague thus: "Brother, I really take the doctrine of the covenant as divinely revealed in Scripture; but let's pretend that I don't, and then we will dwell in harmony and our students will be blessed through our common efforts." Not so. Of course, their students will be blessed by their *common efforts*, for we have seen what great truths they hold *"in common"*; but just because they share these great common truths, they need not *feign* any doctrinal agreement they do not share For it is not a *pretended* agreement assuming a basic disloyalty which cements the bond of unity. The bond of unity is in the hand of God; and frank expression of doctrinal distinctiveness witnesses to loyalty to that bond of unity, but cannot destroy it. And if we did not know long ago that our own Professor at Gindiri is given to absolute frankness based on an indomitable courage, we might have learned of these qualities from those of his critics who testified to his forthright and vigorous witness at Synod of 1958 to the worth of the School he loves.

So let us summarize our progress once again: if there is indeed pedagogical "confusion" in TCNN, it does not lie in (Step One) the creedal basis of the School; nor does it lie in the mere fact (Step Two) of difference; nor does it lie (Step Three) in doctrinal and denominational distinctiveness, rightly understood.

Step Four

Probably now, if not long before, the critic of TCNN wants time for rebuttal. If it is true, he is thinking, that we who oppose TCNN tend to *maximize* the doctrinal differences to be found there; you, supporter of TCNN, are surely tending to *minimize* the real differences operating there. A man has to choose for or against infant baptism; he has to decide upon trans- or con-substantiation, or some other expression of the mystery of the Holy Supper; and so on.

True enough. You and I have made up our minds on these things, too. The process of reaching our decisions may or may not have been painful; but if it gave us difficulty, it was no doubt a pedagogical experience. I may remind the critic that his list of doctrinal differences of TCNN must be ex-

tended farther than any we have seen up to now before it begins to weigh very much against the fundamental common truths of TCNN's creedal basis. And, within the *large area of orthodox creedal unity* provided by the evangelical basis of the College, *why* should the clear and forthright exposition of doctrinal distinctions be *confusing* instead of *challenging?*

Step Five

But to this last question the critic may have an answer. There is not, in fact (he might say), a *large area* of common creedal agreement at TCNN at all. To infer directly from common creedal *statements* to common creedal *agreement* is (he may insist) a false step. Why? Because (he goes on) a Calvinist views *all Christian doctrine* as a Calvinist; so also does the Lutheran, the Baptist, and all others. Therefore, (he concludes) implicitly or explicitly, *all* of a Calvinist's teaching *contradicts* all of a Lutheran's teaching, and so on. There is no area of agreement! Surely, the students who blossom and grow under such confused "light" will be poor fruit indeed; and there will be confusion abounding! Suppose he says thus. What say we?

First, is, then, *this* the argument for "confusion" at Gindiri? Let us specify it carefully, for I wonder if the critic really means what he says. In fact, if what he has just maintained is true, how can he expect anyone to understand and to accept what he says? For, clearly, if *all* that a Calvinist teaches is colored by his Calvinism, then *nothing* that he says is likely to be understandable to — let alone accepted by — a Lutheran, who suffers from the same imprisonment within his doctrinal walls.

But let us disdain such logical puzzles, and ask simply: when Calvinists confess and teach, say, the Apostles' Creed do they, because of their pervasive doctrinal distinctiveness, make this confession and perform this teaching in explicit or implicit difference from Lutherans confessing and teaching the same Creed? I would understand the proponent of the view we are now discussing as answering this question by a *Yes.*

What he means (the critic might say) is this: Calvinism *defines,* as it were, each statement in the Apostles' Creed, (and all others). Thus, when a Calvinist confesses, "I believe in God . . ." he *means* by that confession a certain conception of God peculiar to Calvinism; and the same for the Lutheran, *etc.* Again, ". . . the Father almighty" *means* for each (Calvinist, Lutheran, etc.) the conception of God's fatherhood and God's omnipotence peculiar to each. And so on.

What shall be said of this? It is evident, upon brief reflection, that no such view of the Apostles' Creed occupied the mind of Calvin. When he speaks of it as "the Formula of Confession which all Christians have in common," he would have been flatly contradicting himself to his teeth if he had meant that, in fact, Luther and he had precisely no *meaning* of this Confession "in common." Furthermore, the differences between Luther and himself of which Calvin was conscious were not of this sophisticated variety at all. These differences centered about the Supper and, to lesser degree, about church policy; but such differences can hardly be understood as *defining* the Confession of faith these men shared together.

But let us pursue the argument into its more sophisticated haunts. Let us say that epistemology, the problem of what knowledge really is, was foreign to Calvin, but is not to us. Living after Kant, we know, as Calvin did not, that the mind (this is the critic's argument — not mine) subtly construes all experience, and molds it into the forms determined by our religious orientation. We may think of Calvinism, then (it is said), as an indefinable "flavor" or context or power, characteristically Reformed, which distinguishes the Calvinist confession and teaching *all down the line* from the Lutheran, and the others. One may sense, (we are told), rather than define this distinctiveness; for the very definition is governed by it; but it counts decisively in education, and (it may be concluded) *therefore* Calvinist and Lutheran cannot teach without friction and confusion at Gindiri, and they can have no common agreement.

How true is all this? First, this argument "proves far too much, and opens wide the doors to doctrinal relativism. The relation of verbal symbols to reality, and to understanding reality, is a very complex matter. It may well be that in some subtle and indefinable sense a Lutheran *does understand* the Apostles' Creed in a way "different" from that in which a Calvinist *understands* that Creed, though (I repeat) Calvin by no means thought so — and he was not so unaware of linguistic and essentially epistenological problems as we might suppose. But if we could actually *define* these subtle *shades of difference* operative in our *understanding* of the Creed, the isolating influence of these differences would not stop at denominational lines. In this recondite sense, you and I also *differ* in our understanding of the Creed — just because we are *different* persons — and, further, we differ, then, today from what we were yesterday.

But the proponents of this epistemological view of the doctrinal distinctiveness of Calvinism have no desire, I trust, so to *individualize* the meaning of the Apostles' Creed — or, for that matter, of the Bible itself — that it becomes a matter of "my" Creed as opposed to "yours." Yet this is the consequence of embarking on the contention that Cal-

vinism differs from Lutheranism in some subtle sense *all down the line.*

Moreover, if my "brand" of the Apostles' Creed does indeed *differ* from a Lutheran's "brand" of the same Creed, it will occur to one of us, sooner or later, to ask: But *where* is the Creed itself? We will look in vain for *it!* All we will find are "Calvinist Apostles' Creed" and "Lutheran Apostles' Creed" and the like.

No, if someone is to prove "confusion" at Gindiri upon the basis of *down the line* differences between Calvinists and Lutherans, he will only end in scepticism.

Happily, it is not so. The creedal basis of TCNN *is truth* — truth in which men live victoriously and die in peace. This is the significance of Calvin's test of "sound doctrine," namely, that it shall be to edification and godly life. Such doctrine the creeds upon which TCNN rests have been since their enunciation. No mirror of Christian denominationalism can, or is intended to, subvert the clear, "I believe in God . . . " And, standing on this Rock, the professors at TCNN *are one* in the large area of a *Common Christian faith* and, being one, they can differ without confusing or being confused.

Step Six

I will not summarize our progress to this point, except to say that no decisive argument for the contention that TCNN education must be "confusing," "insipid" (and the rest) has yet emerged. But there is one more.

This is the really pedagogical argument that a curriculum which reflects, and a faculty which professes, any doctrinal differences at all provides a weaker, flabbier instruction than could be provided in a school whose faculty were altogether of one doctrinal mind. And in this sense (it is argued) graduates of TCNN will be "confused" and their training will be "insipid."

This is a purely pedagogical question. Pedagogy is an art. Material which one professor makes challenging, vital, and inspiring, may become in the hands of another professor prosaic, stultifying, inert, and insipid indeed. There is no guarantee that either kind of teaching will go on just because a seminary is united or because it is a separate institution.

One might argue, indeed, that stimulation and conviction will occur most naturally — irrespective of the art of the teacher — in the kind of school where currents of differences flow freely. And I think this is true. But this can be pushed to seeming absurdity. Let us throw open the doors then (it is said) at Calvin Seminary and invite all "brands" of professors to come in. It is quite obvious, however, why a single denomination, training its men for service to that denomination, will erect its own confessional standards over appointment to the faculty of its own Seminary.

But we must face the fact that difference becomes pedagogically fruitful only when it occurs within some accepted framework of, ultimately, religious values. We will understand that one of the weaknesses of secular higher education is this: that so wide a range of differences exists among the faculty, in the absence of a positive and universally accepted standard of values, that students easily come to believe that "all truths are so true, that none is true at all." Such education is, indeed, "insipid" because, in fact, its "creedal assumptions" are insipid, colorless, and empty.

But TCNN rests upon a firm creedal basis, Christian, orthodox, and evangelical. Within this framework, divergent views become pedagogically stimulating. In fact, much good teaching anywhere is carried on by the process of confrontation of one interpretation with another, *within an accepted framework of values.* This kind of teaching, conducted in love, promises enhanced powers of discrimination, evaluation, perception, and conviction. This kind of pedagogy is a distinct and valuable alternative to mere indoctrination.

Thus, while we do not, for obvious reasons, hire Lutherans and Baptists themselves to teach their views in our own Seminary, the fact that union effort is mandated by the present status of the Nigerian Church is no cause for dismay, and threatens no inevitable weakness or confusion. Our own Seminary students are confronted, too, by the living alternatives represented by the distinctive doctrines of Lutherans, Baptists, and the like, always within an accepted creedal framework. Our own students, too, as they move through Calvin Seminary must come to clear understanding, and personal evaluation of these other doctrines. And our own students, too, must finally make and defend their own independent and self-sufficient acceptance of the one doctrine and rejection of its opposite, if they are to mingle effectively with these other brethren in the world of the ministry. This is done, and can be done, without confusion and without insipidity. And when accomplished, this has been significant education; and the graduate who has in this way come to possess his doctrinal convictions, knows very well what he believes — and, moreover, he knows *why* his beliefs are what they are.

What, then, can emerge from this confrontation at TCNN of doctrinal differences within the norm of Christianity is a graduate who again and again has been obliged to make prayerful recourse to that one Standard by which all doctrinal differences are finally tested, the Standard accepted by all who teach and all who study at Gindiri: the Bible.

Who knows what may come from this searching of the Scriptures, over and again, as felt differences demand explanation, in Nigeria? We do know this: such searching is never in vain, never fruitless, *never ended in confusion!* On the contrary, it is thus that the servants of God are fed with meat for firm and effective witness!

And in Geneva

It happens that Calvin, too, once taught school. Like Ursinus after him — the co-author of our *Heidelberg Catechism* — Calvin did not hesitate to teach in a union enterprise with Protestants who leaned to Luther and to humanism. But this is not my point here. Calvin also founded a school — the Academy of Geneva. And he had a hand in shaping its curriculum and methods of instruction.

The primary and secondary curriculum at the Academy was heavily classical. The students worked hard in Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Caesar, Livy; in Isocrates, Demosthenes, Xenophon, and Homer. Alongside these they mastered the *Catechism,* read *St. Luke* in the Greek, studied a "selected Epistle," attended sermons on Wednesday and Sunday, and had daily hours of prayer and devotion.

This combination of some of the most powerful and attractive of the pagan minds with Christian doctrine might rouse one to wonder if Calvin aimed deliberately at confusion of the youth. If one first allays that concern upon the supposition that, of course, the Christian professors (called Regents) softened the impact of pagan humanism by appropriate classroom commentary and critique as the work went along, what, then, is his surprise to read, early in the "Order of the College of Geneva," this injunction: "In reading, the Regents shall maintain a moderate gravity in their countenance, that they shall make no attacks against the authors they are expounding, but that they shall take great pains to explain faithfully their meaning." Do you suppose they might not even criticize Ovid, say, by so much as a lifted eyebrow?

And do you hear an irate Genevan burgher saying, at the top of his lungs: *What! Send my son to the Academy Calvin has just founded? Absurd! Have him subjected to Greek rhetoric, Latin humanism, faithfully expounded, for two thirds of the time, with a little Christian doctrine added simply to confuse him the more? Why the veriest nest of contradiction! If that man Calvin had designed to rob boys of all certainty, he could have done no worse! I'll have my own school, or none at all!*

Well, students came from all over Europe to the Academy. And they successfully graduated, by the many hundreds. And no important history of education fails to devote a page or two or more to the pedagogical wisdom of John Calvin.

This year we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Academy of Geneva.

Is it not appropriate that in this anniversary year we may also celebrate the founding of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria?

Summary

What kind of education may we expect, then, from TCNN?

We may expect, in God's blessing, that graduates from this Christian College will possess a certain, sure, and vital grasp of the "sum of knowledge . . . common to all Christians," those great creedal affirmations upon which the TCNN rests, and which we ourselves confess. We may expect those graduates to have achieved a discriminating and personal commitment to distinctive evangelical doctrines, often those characteristically our own, within this "common" creedal framework. All this we may hope, first of all, because the School goes forward today, not in its own strength but in the strength of our mutual Lord; and, second, because the School follows a pattern of challenging the student to independent judgment by confronting him with differing perspectives, within the Christian creedal framework, similar to the method John Calvin also employed.

Let us rejoice for the events begun this February 14, 1959.

Henry Schultze

1893-1959

Professor, Grundy Center College, 1920
Minister, Sherman Street Christian Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, 1924
Professor, Calvin Seminary, 1926
President, Calvin College, 1940
Professor, Calvin College, 1951

The Staff and Publisher of the *Reformed Journal* mourns the passing of Professor Henry Schultze and extends to the bereaved family its deepest sympathies. The Reformed community possessed in Professor Schultze a Christian scholar, writer, and educator, and it will sorely miss his congenial presence.

John Calvin and Ecumenicity (II)

by John Bratt

CALVIN was no mere theorist with respect to the ecumenical challenge. He matched word with action and geared his idealism to the realistic situation. Not only did he urge the other leaders to temper their differences and cultivate unity, he took the time amid an incredibly busy program to engage in ecumenical conversation and discussion.

He concentrated his attention first upon those most closely akin in theology, doctrine and polity, and then broadened his interest to include those more distantly related. Throughout it all he insisted upon inflexibility with respect to the essentials while advocating latitudinarianism on minor issues. He wrote to Farel from Strassburg in 1538, "Let the ministers, therefore, by whom God permits the church to be governed, be what they may; if the signs of the true Church are perceived, it will be better not to separate from their communion. Nor is it an objection that some impure doctrines are there delivered, for there is scarce a church which retains none of the remains of ignorance. It is sufficient for us that the doctrines on which the Church of Christ is founded shall hold its place and influence." He deplored the intractability of those whose "preposterous zeal" wrecked the Colloquy of Poissy, and he warned his colleagues against allowing "every difference of opinion to break out into an open rupture." Calvin worked arduously for the peace and unity of the Church. We survey briefly some of his major ecumenical efforts.

The Swiss Zwinglians

Both geographically and theologically the Zwinglian churches of Zurich and surroundings stood in close proximity to the Calvinistic church of Geneva. To them Calvin directed his attention. Apparently Zwingli himself was ecumenically minded but his untimely death in 1531 prevented any large exercise of that propensity. The people of Zurich, however, tended to be separatistic. Calvin wrote to Laski about them, "Though the Zurichers are averse to a conference, if an opportunity should present itself, I will endeavor to draw them over to us." Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, was similarly reticent at first. In one of his earliest pieces of correspondence with him Calvin saw fit to remind him of the fact (apparently Bullinger was forgetting it) that Satan was the originator of all this discord and disunion. He proposed to Bullinger that they work for "a harmony of views . . . respecting the principal points of doctrine, while in other matters let each of us leave the judgment of the other unfettered." Divergent views of the Lord's Supper was the major issue that separated them. Calvin's latitude and flexibility is evident in his assertion made to Bullinger, that "although there is for me a deeper communion with Christ in the sacraments than your words express, we do not therefore cease to have the same Christ and to be one in Him." The fruit of these negotiations was the *Zurich Consensus* of 1549, which merged the Zwinglian and Calvinistic streams.

The French Reformed

The Reformation took an initially strong foothold in Calvin's native land. The movement grew rapidly and many of the nobility were favorably disposed towards it. But there was considerable fragmentation. In 1551 Henry of Navarre, who was somewhat sympathetic to Protestantism, proposed a conference to try to resolve the religious difference within the realm. Calvin gave strong support to the proposal but it failed of realization. Six years later Calvin addressed a letter to the current monarch, Henry II, urging upon him first, recognition of the true Church, namely, "the society of the faithful who agree to follow the Word of God and the pure religion that depends upon it, and who profit therein during the whole course of their lives, increasing and confirming themselves in the fear of God," and secondly, promotion of the unity of the Church. In 1560 he recommended to the French Reformed churches the convening of a free and universal council with elected delegates from all the churches. But the resurgence of Roman Catholicism under the Guise family and the outbreak of the Huguenot-Catholic wars (1562-1563; 1567-1568; 1568-1570) prevented the realization of these hopes and plans. Protestantism in France was reduced to a struggle for existence and there was little opportunity for ecumenical relationships.

The Scotch Presbyterians

Since the Scottish Reformed Church did not win independence until some six decades of the sixteenth century had passed, relations with them ecumenically were limited in the main to personal correspondence between Calvin and his devoted disciple John Knox. Knox was inclined to be inflexible and intolerant. Calvin urged him, "With respect to ceremonies, I trust . . . that you will moderate your rigor," and reminded him that "certain things should be tolerated even if you do not quite approve of them." When Knox accepted the

call to Frankfort to serve the refugee church there and the Prayer Book was currently being used, he promptly discarded that obnoxious liturgical piece. Calvin rebuked him for his tactlessness and advised him to retain the Prayer Book in the interests of peace even though it contained certain "absurdities." And when the fiery Scottish Reformer launched his "First Blast Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women," Calvin urged him to tone down his utterances and be more moderate in his expostulations.

The Lutherans

Calvin encountered some difficulty in promoting ecumenical relations with the Lutherans. In 1538 he proposed that Bucer and Capito confer with Lutheran representatives and explore their differences with a view to reaching some understanding. When this effort proved abortive, Calvin wrote, "We have reason to lament that good and otherwise right-hearted men are not more earnestly affected by the desire of promoting the public peace." Luther wrote a vehement treatise against both Zwinglians and Reformed in 1544 entitled, "A Short Confession Concerning the Supper." Calvin regretted its appearance and deplored the violent outbursts of his fellow Reformer. His main concern, however, was to avoid open rupture, and he advised overlooking the "overbearing tyranny" and "ungovernable impetuosity" of the German leader so that the enemies of Christ would not make sport of the divisions in Protestantism.

Ecumenical prospects brightened when Melanchthon, who called himself a "quiet peaceable bird," came to the fore. Calvin had cordial relations with him, publishing a French translation of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* and carrying on extensive correspondence with him. Melanchthon was inclined, however, to make concessions to the point of sacrifice of principle. In his correspondence with him, Calvin treated at length one of their main points of difference, that of free will and synergism, and suggested Twelve Articles of faith that might well serve as a basis of agreement between the two communions. The death of Melanchthon in 1560 seems to have terminated ecumenical relations between Lutheran and Reformed.

The Anglicans

In 1552 Archbishop Cranmer, with the approbation of the youthful Edward VI and the Duke of Northumberland (the latter actuated in the main by political motives), proposed a "godly synod" of Protestants. Invitations were extended to Calvin, Melanchthon, Bullinger, and others. Calvin responded enthusiastically, averring that he too was deeply interested in uniting "the sentiments of all good and learned men, and so, according to the rule of Scripture, to bring the separated churches into one, neither labor nor trouble of any kind ought to be spared." But the excellent proposal never found realization. Calvin was too much involved in the internal problems of Geneva to leave at that time, Melanchthon and Bullinger fell into serious disagreement, Edward VI died soon thereafter. Calvin did dedicate the first edition of his commentary on Isaiah to Edward VI and the second edition to Elizabeth, and he addressed some correspondence to English leaders. But that was the extent of concrete ecumenical relations.

The Roman Catholics

A series of colloquies between Protestants and Roman Catholics was arranged by Charles V in an effort to reunite his realm religiously and thus present a solid front to the encroachments of the Turks. Meetings were held in Frankfort in 1539, in Hagenau and Worms in 1540 and in Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 1541. Melanchthon represented the Lutherans while Capito, Bucer, Sturm, and Calvin were commissioned as delegates of the city of Strassburg. Pflug, Gropper, Eck, and Contarini were the Roman Catholic delegates. Calvin attended with some misgivings and little optimism since, in his estimation, Pflug and Gropper were poor theologians and Eck was theatrical and impertinent and would "spoil all by his officious meddling." The temperature of Calvin's anticipations fluctuated. He wrote in March of 1541: "Although scant, there is however the hope of doing somewhat," but a month later he said, "If anything very desirable shall be attained, it will fall out beyond all my expectations" and furthermore, "I do not indeed despair but when I begin to hope then I remember what took place at Worms." A considerable measure of agreement was reached by the conferees on the matters of original sin, free will, and the nature of the Church. But there was much disagreement on justification, invocation of saints, and especially transubstantiation, the primacy of the Pope, and the authority of the Church. "There," said Calvin, "stood the impassable rock which barred the way to further progress." The rift between Roman Catholic and Protestants at that point was too deep to permit mending.

It is to Calvin's undying credit that he grasped every opportunity to resolve the differences in Christendom. He possessed a strong ecumenical spirit.

We will be happy to mail a sample issue of the *Journal,* together with a subscription blank and postpaid envelope, to your friends and acquaintances.

The American Revolt Against Freemasonry

by Peter Hoekstra

EVER since the establishment of Freemasonry in America, in the eighteenth century, the institution continued to grow in number of adherents, in social prestige, and in political influence. It still included in its ranks the wealthy and influential men in all walks of life — politicians high and low, doctors, teachers, lawyers, bankers and merchants. They came to regard themselves as an elite group, as a class apart, as a sort of social aristocracy, and in a sense they were. By the third decade of the nineteenth century Masonry was in a very flourishing condition everywhere in the United States, with the possible exception of the deep South.

In 1826 occurred an incident which set up a chain reaction against the Order. One William Morgan of Batavia, New York, a former Mason, wrote a book revealing the secrets of Masonry and made a contract with David Miller to have it printed. When this became known, a few of the hotheaded among the local Masons determined to prevent its publication. When threats against Miller failed, they set fire to his printing offices. They then had Morgan arrested for a small debt, and one night as he was being released he was seized, forced into a closed carriage, spirited away westward across several counties, with friendly Masons furnishing relays of horses, and secreted in the abandoned Federal fort at Niagara. No Mason ever revealed what then became of him and the mystery has not been solved to this day, but presumably he was murdered. By these wanton acts Masonry had made itself guilty of several crimes: of arson, abduction, fraudulent use of Federal property, and probably of murder.

Miller, the printer, who had witnessed the abduction, now made an earnest appeal to the public to vindicate these crimes. Through his efforts a series of public gatherings came to be held in western New York, in the general vicinity of Rochester, and at one of these a committee was appointed to gather the facts, with the object of procuring judicial and legislative action against the guilty. After several months delay, a grand jury at Canandaigua brought indictments against four men. On court day, January 1, 1827, every inn and tavern in this and neighboring towns was crowded and scores had to be turned away. But to the disgust of the assembled crowd, the murder charge was never pressed. The four were sentenced for conspiracy, but the extreme leniency of the penalty — from one month to two years in the common jail — convinced a thoroughly aroused public that sheriffs, courts and juries in several counties were in league with the whole fraternity to defeat the ends of justice. When the guilty parties were not even dismissed from the Order, the conviction grew that Masons shielded each other in crime.

While all manner of rumors were in circulation as to the time and manner of Morgan's death, and while for months a committee was at work watching the shores of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario for a trace of his corpse,[1] the people of western New York began to assemble in the spring of 1827 in a series of mass meetings. Thus was begun a popular crusade against the Masonic Order. At Seneca it was resolved that secret societies and Freemasonry in particular were dangerous to freedom. One group dismissed its minister because he was a Mason. The meeting at Poultney resolved: "We will not hear any person preach unless said preacher should refuse to meet with any lodge of Freemasons, and openly declare that Masonry is bad."

ANTIMASONRY has been called a New England movement, but this is true only in the sense that it usually followed the path of New England emigration. It was in the main a rural movement, for Masonry was entrenched in cities and towns, and had its origin in western New York. Here the Holland Land Company (1793-1795) had purchased several million acres of land, and had then attracted a desirable type of settler from New England. These folk carried with them their staunch adherence to the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, but also their opposition to Popery, Unitarians, and Masonry.

Even before the Morgan affair a Presbyterian Synod in 1821 had decided that a professing Christian could not be a Mason. After the Morgan affair this denomination increased its opposition *throughout the country*; its ministry was told to renounce Masonry, its members were told to sever all connections with it, and "to hold no fellowship with Masons." Of Presbyterians Masons came to say:

1. A reward of fifty pounds was offered by the Lieutenant Governor of Canada for any information of his whereabouts.

"Nearly every Antimasonic press is under Presbyterian surveillance." Congregationalists, who were stronger in Eastern New York, must in the main be ranked among the opponents. The Methodists were divided on the issue, but as early as 1823 a General Methodist Conference had forbidden its clergy in Pennsylvania to join the Order. After the Morgan excitement this group became more vocal in its opposition and ordered its members to take no part in Masonic processions or festivals. Masons paid this group an unwilling tribute when they said, "No religious sect throughout the United States has done more for the Antimasonic cause than the Methodists." Baptists apparently carried on a spirited discussion among themselves on the issue, yet among its laymen many came to found Antimasonic papers. So far as known, the Dutch Reformed Church did not fall in line until 1831, when the General Synod ordered its ministers to renounce Masonry and forbade its churches to receive members of the Order into its communion.

Any attempt to explain the phenomenally rapid spread of the movement must take into account this *moral and religious basis of opposition.* The Morgan case was but the occasion — surely not the sole cause — but simply hastened an already existing trend. Antimasonry started as a religious crusade. The arguments used against Masonry on this ground were much the same as may be heard among us today. Masonry claimed to be a saving institution, a way of salvation; its oaths were profane, horrivle, and shockingly un-Christian; it used the Sacred Scriptures for an unholy purpose; its ceremonies were sacrilegious. The Proceedings of the Dutch Reformed Church at Hackensack, New Jersey, June 1831, summed it up as follows: "Masonic society professes to find its foundation in the sacred volumes, to have an intimate relation with Solomon's Temple, and to be a religious fraternity — a household of faith —a band of mystic brethren. Examining it in the light of Scripture we find the religion of the association to be a mixture of Paganism and Mohammedanism, with a corruption of Judaism and Christianity; for many professed Christians . . . Jews and even Gentiles are found in its community."

Antimasonry also had a *democratic basis;* it was in fact essentially a democratic movement, and as such partook of the spirit of the times. For the third decade of the nineteenth century saw the beginnings of Jacksonian Democracy, which stressed the idea of equal rights and privileges for all. And Masonry, as the following quotation from a Masonic source will indicate, was inclined to be snobbish and arrogant: "Men in low circumstances, although possessed of some education and good morals, are not fit to be members of the institution. They ought to know Freemasonry requires not only knowledge but ancestry, and decent external appearance, to retain its ancient respectability and grandeur." Not only did Masonry engender a snobbish class spirit, the very opposite of democracy, but to this should be added its striving to gain for its members the best positions in society and state. These traits did not help to endear them to the general public. The conviction grew that Masonry and democracy were incompatible. Masonry was accordingly denounced as a secret empire, as a government; its rules were paramount to all laws, and the exalted titles and dignities which it bestowed upon its high moguls were regarded as a violation of democratic symplicity and a reminder of monarchy.

AMONG the means employed to convince the public of the dangers of Masonry were lectures by prominent leaders, some of whom were recanting Masons. They also turned out numerous tracts and pamphlets, which often contained quotations against the Order from such prominent American leaders as Benjamin Rush, John Quincy Adams, Edward Everett, John Marshall, John Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and others. Another means employed was the newspaper. Since the Masonic press gave little publicity to the Morgan affair and referred to the culprits as "Masonic martyrs," and was therefore considered suspect, these newspapers were called *free presses.* Soon the region "from Boston to Buffalo teemed with Antimasonic newspapers." Little Vermont had fifteen, Massachusetts had forty-five weeklies and a daily, Pennsylvania, had fifty-five. But in this respect, too, New York took the lead and set the pace. In 1832 it had one hundred forty-one papers. Another potent weapon that was used in various states was to resort to hostile legislation, with the frank object of depriving the institution of its legal right to exist. This legislation took a variety of forms and certain phases of it may best be illustrated by the contest in the legislature of Pennsylvania.

Not many great leaders had emerged in this state, but in Thaddeus Stevens they found a leader who was the champion of them all. He became the field marshall of the Antimasons. His enemies called him its high priest, but there was nothing priestly or saintly in Stevens' makeup and his opposition rested not on a religious but on a democratic basis. He showed a stubbornness, a bulldog tenacity, as he marshalled his forces in session after session for attack upon attack. He was no lone wolf, but his great strength lay in the fact that he could count on the loyalty of thousands upon thousands of followers. Stevens was the spokesman for the New England element in the western and northern tier of counties, but especially for the Calvinistic Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of southern and central Pennsylvania. He drew

to his following also several of the German sects, such as Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards, Moravians, and some of the Quakers.

The struggle began over a very minor issue, but one which indicates the form of attack. Masonic halls, it seems, were exempt from taxation. At the session of 1829 a bill was introduced for the repeal of the law exempting the Masonic hall in Philadelphia from taxation. Stevens also sponsored legislation barring Masons from jury service in criminal cases, when one, but not both, of the parties to a suit was a Mason and to bar a Masonic judge from presiding in such a case. "So stubbornly did he fight for this resolution that it was barely defeated." At another session he introduced a lengthy resolution for the appointment of a committee to investigate every political aspect of Masonry. Among other matters this committee was to ascertain from the governor how many applications for office "have been founded on Masonic merit or claimed on Masonic rights"; how many pardons "have been given to members of the mystic tie"; whether or not judges had been influenced by the *grand hailing sign,* handed, sent, or thrown to them by either of the parties litigant." He introduced a bill for the complete suppression of all secret societies bound together by illegal oaths. In 1834 he introduced a resolution forbidding the use of any but strictly judicial oaths, and when the resolution failed of adoption he gave notice that he would bring up the matter every morning till the end of the session. He thus reminds one of the fight which John Quincy Adams carried on for years in the House of Representatives for the right of petition. As early as 1830 J. Q. Adams expressed doubts as to the legality and constitutionality of some of the measures thus proposed in Pennsylvania, and also tried out in some other states. Some state governors took the same stand. Perhaps that is one reason why, so far as known, none of these proposals was ever enacted into law.

THE movement enters still another phase when it became political and began forming distinct party organizations in various states. In a sense this may be regarded as but another means of carrying on the crusade. This phase of the subject may best be treated in a separate article.

It may be well to note at this point what effect this movement over the years had upon the institution of Masonry itself. A crusade extending over a full decade was bound to produce results, and in the end could point to substantial victories.

As early as 1827, doctors, tradesman, local politicians and other Masons found it convenient and profitable to announce publicly that they had broken with the Order. By 1828 the number of secedrs was large enough to hold a well-attended convention at Leroy, New York. Among other decisions, this convention affirmed that Morgan's book was "a fair and full exposition of the first three degrees," i.e., of the so-called Blue Lodge. Speaking of the year 1828, Thurlow Weed notes in his *Autobiography,* "The feelings of the Masons, exasperated by the existence of a political organization which made war upon the institution of Freemasonry, became intensely so by the renunciation of Masonry by ministers, elders and deacons of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches." He also testifies to the character of the conflict when he says that it "became more embittered and relentless, personally, politically, socially and ecclesiastically, than any other I have ever participated in."

In town after town Masons put up notices of the voluntary dissolution of their lodges and the surrender of their charters of incorporation.[2] We read that lodges were "demolished" and that their organization was "destroyed." Hammond in his *History of New York* baldly states that Masonry "had in point of fact ceased to exist, and that Antimasonry had accomplished the object they originally had in view, which was the destruction of Masonry," and he adds, "It is equally true, that Masonry was as effectually demolished in November, 1832, as in February, 1834." How many lodges went out of existence will perhaps never be known, but one Harvey, a Mason, testified: "Lodges by scores and hundreds went down before the torrent and were swept away. In the state of New York alone 400 lodges or two-thirds of the craft became extinct. In June, 1838, there were only 46 lodges at work in Pennsylvania." Never before, in this country or anywhere else, had Masonry been subjected to such a massive, devastating attack.

What were the permanent results?

A lasting reminder of the conflict — but it is no more than a reminder — is a statue which still stands at Batavia, N.Y., in honor of William Morgan. One of the victims of the conflict was the Phi Beta Kappa fraternity. It was compelled by public opinion in New England to abandon its secrecy, its grip and its ritual, and to become, as it has since remained, a purely honor society.

Our own Secession movement is proof that our Christian Reformed fathers found that Masonry had regained its status even among the Dutch Reformed ministry. And this was less than two decades after the end of the crusade.

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2. These notices at times display a feeling of sadness at the hard fate which had befallen them, and again a dignified surrender to the storm of public opinion. In the words of the George Washington Lodge at Franklin, Pa.,: "We know of no duty which requires us to continue an association when such continuance may distract society, and separate those who ought to be friends; nor are we aware of any beneficial results likely to flow from an adherence to an Order that will not be more than counterbalanced by the excitement which such an experience may perpetuate."

John Calvin on the Heart of the Gospel

"Now we see that the sum of the gospel consisteth of these two parts, namely, of the doctrine of Christ, and of his acts; forasmuch as he did not only bring unto men that ambassage which was given him in charge of his Father, but also performed all things that could be required of the Messias." (Acts 1:Intro.)

"But this is the sum of our faith, that we know that the Son of Mary is that Christ and Mediator which God promised from the beginning; that done, that we know and understand why he died and rose again; that we do not feign to ourselves any earthly king, but that we seek in him righteousness, and all parts of our salvation; both which things Paul is said to have proved out of the Scriptures." (Acts 17:3)

"It would be too long to explain what we are to learn from the Scriptures; and, in the preceding verse, he [Paul] has given a brief summary of them under the word *faith*. The most valuable knowledge, therefore, is 'faith in Christ.' Next follows instruction for regulating the life, to which are added the excitements of exhortations and reproofs. Thus he who knows how to use the Scriptures properly, is in want of nothing for salvation, or for a holy life." (2 Tim. 3:16)

"And if it is the will of God that those whom he has elected shall be saved, and if in this manner he ratifies and executes his eternal decree, whoever he be that is not satisfied with Christ, but indulges in curious inquiries about eternal predestination, such a person, as far as lies in his power, desires to be saved contrary to the purpose of God. The election of God is in itself hidden and secret; the Lord manifests it *by calling*, that is, when he bestows on us this blessing *of calling us*.

"They are madmen, therefore, who seek their own salvation or that of others in the whirpool of predestination, not keeping the way of salvation which is exhibited to them. Nay more, by this foolish speculation, they endeavor to overturn the force and effect of predestination; for if God has elected us to this end, that we may believe, take away faith, and election will be imperfect. But we have no right to break through the order and succession of the beginning and the end, since God, by his purpose, hath decreed and determined that it shall proceed unbroken. Besides, as the election of God, by an indissoluable bond, draws his calling along with it, so when God has effectually called us to faith in Christ, let this have as much weight with us as if he had engraven his seal to ratify his decree concerning our salvation. For the testimony of the Holy Spirit is nothing else than the sealing of our adoption (Rom. viii, 15). To every man, therefore, his faith is a sufficient attestation of the eternal predestination of God, so that it would be a shocking sacrilege to carry the inquiry farther; for that man offers an aggravated insult to the Holy Spirit, who refuses to assent to his simple testimony." (John 6:40)

"But what principally belongs to faith is, to know that, by the sacrifice of his [Christ's] death, atonement has been made for our sins, and we are reconciled to God; that his resurrection was a triumph over vanquished death; that we are renewed by his Spirit, in order that, being dead to the flesh and to sin, we may live to righteousness; that he is the only Mediator; that the Spirit is the earnest of our adoption; in short, that in him is found every thing that belongs to eternal life." (John 9:37).

". . . we are taught by this passage, that if we wish to obtain the knowledge of Christ, we must seek it from the *Scriptures;* for they who imagine whatever they choose concerning Christ will ultimately have nothing instead of him but a shadowy phantom. First, then, we ought to believe that Christ cannot be properly known in any other way than from *the Scriptures*: and if it be so, it follows that we ought to read *the Scriptures* with the express design of finding Christ in them. Whoever shall turn aside from this object, though he may weary himself throughout his whole life in learning, will never attain the knowledge of the truth; for what wisdom can we have without the wisdom of God. Next, as we are commanded to seek Christ in *the Scriptures,* so he declares in this passage that our labors shall not be fruitless; for the Father testifies in them concerning his Son in such a manner that he will manifest him to us beyond all doubt." (John 5:39)

"Now let it be understood, that this joy was common to all people, because it was indiscriminately offered to all. For God has promised Christ, not to one person or to another, but to the whole seed of Abraham. If the Jews were deprived, for the most part, of the joy that was offered them, it arose from their unbelief; just as, at the present day, God invites all indiscriminately to salvation through the Gospel, but the ingratitude of the world is the reason why this grace, which is equally offered to all, is enjoyed by few. When the angel says that this *joy shall be to all the people,* he speaks of the chosen people only; but now that 'the middle wall of partition' has been thrown down, the same message has reference to the whole human race. For Christ proclaims peace, not only 'to them that are nigh', but to them that are 'far off,' to 'strangers' equally with citizens." (Harmony of the Evangelists I, 116)

"The principal articles of theology are, the curse pronounced on the human race, the corruption of nature, the mortification of the flesh, the renewal of the life, the reconciliation effected by free grace through the only sacrifice, the imputation of righteousness, by means of which a sinner is accepted by God, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit." (John 28:38)

Book Reviews

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY. By D. J. Wiseman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950. $3.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM F. ALBRIGHT, Emeritus Professor of Semitic Languages, Johns Hopkins University.

In this beautiful little volume the assistant keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities in the British Museum illustrates the light being shed by archaeology on the Bible, with the aid of over a hundred photographs, charts and drawings. The illustrations are excellent and are well described and explained by the attached captions and the accompanying text. Mr. Wiseman has himself taken a very active part in publishing cuneiform documents and is thoroughly familiar with his subject matter. He begins with the "Dawn of Civilization," and in six informative and interesting chapters he carries us with him to the close of "New Testament Times"; a seventh chapter deals with "Methods and Results."

The book can be heartily recommended for its competence, its conservative approach to Biblical problems, and for a breadth of understanding which takes the Biblical record as a whole without trying to force it into an artificial strait jacket. In other words, Mr. Wiseman is a well trained scholar as well as a warm friend of Biblical religion. Archaeology is not merely a source of useful apologetic material; it is also a new science of incomparable value to all who are interested in the past of mankind. The reviewer doubts whether any serious reader can fail to turn the last page without feeling greatly enriched by his experience.

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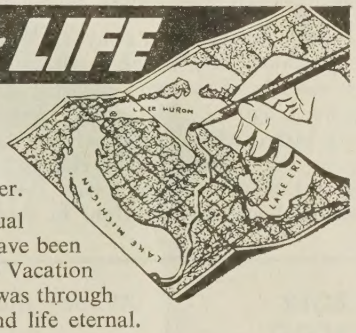

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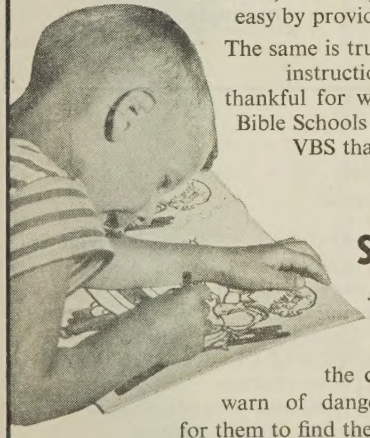

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LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

SIRS:

Whither are we drifting? This thought came to me with the introduction of Women Suffrage in our church. The reason is that I consider the congregational meeting, though not a ruling body, nevertheless a controlling power. That this is a controlling power is evident from the fact that the consistory always abides by the decision of the congregation. (See Church Order by Schaver, Vol. 1, p. 130).

Now when the Apostle Paul speaks of ruling or controlling the church, he always places that task and responsibility upon man, not the woman. Some would have us believe that the Apostle places that responsibility upon the man and not the woman because of the low estate of the woman at that time and for that reason it was not practical. But now with the development of Christianity the woman has come to her own and should have a place equal and alongside of the man. However, the Apostle repudiates any such idea by making it clear that the position of the man in the church was by virtue of Creation and therefore no development of the woman will change it.

Also note that God holds man responsible for listening to his wife, and because he exercised no control brought the curse upon all mankind (Gen. 3:17).

A few months ago I had a conversation with a friend (member of the Reformed Church) and in discussing the introduction of Woman Suffrage, and stating my point of view, the brother said, "I heartily agree with you. However, if I should have to defend the other side, do you know what argument I would use? I would use the statement of Christ when he said, 'If these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out' [Luke 19:40]. For the male members of the church do not exercise their responsibility." Well, if this should be a picture of our church, it would be a sad commentary on the male members of our church, the leaders included.

I have before me a copy of *Woman in the Church* by Russell C. Prohl. This is a restudy of woman's place in building the kingdom. The author examines every text of the Bible which has bearing on the woman in the church, and explains them in such a way that the woman should have a right to vote in the congregational meeting, and should have a right to become Deacon, Elder, and Preacher. I say that he examines every text in the Bible? No, he also finds one that he evidently is not able to explain this way and simply says, "The statement in that text I do not believe.". . .

Now since our Church has erased the distinction between man and woman, it's logical to expect women Deacons, Elders, and Preachers officiating in our Church.

Sincerely yours,
ANDREW DEBOER

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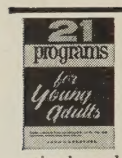

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